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Space invaders: appropriating a youth centre

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SPACE INVADERS
APPROPRIATING A YOUTH CENTRE



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My thesis addresses the many issues that today's youth face and aims to rethink the youth centre as a place that combines youth culture and architecture to create a space that not only provides adequate recreational and vocational opportunities but which is also representative of youth.

Theoretically, I focus on notions around finding identity within the city, whilst questioning the stigmatisms around various youth subcultures. I look in more depth at how certain youth appropriate space within the city and by analyzing their process of appropriation, whilst noting the significance the stages of appropriation have in the pursuit for one's identity, parallels are drawn from various theorists. Particular reference to theories by Iain Borden, Jeffrey Hou, Andy Bennett, Dick Hebdige and others, explore the notions around the insurgent use of public space, youth culture, street culture, and the meaning of style and expression among youth.

Through research into various subcultures of youth and activities that youth are actively involved in in and around the city, it aims to explore the youth centre as a programmatic model for reaching young people in South Africa. By appropriating the language and influences of youth as key design ingredients, it aims to create an architectural intervention, called The 3rd Place Youth Centre, in Newtown North, through which youth can reconnect to their surroundings thus giving youngsters a much-needed sense of place and identity within their ever-changing city.

